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University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present. 28078.
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UM TO HOST GYMNASTIC REGIONALS

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MISSOULA--

The University of Montana will host the 1977 Regional Gymnastics Championships of the Northwestern College Women's Sports Association (NCWSA) March 11 and 12 in the Adams Field House. The preliminary rounds will be held on Friday, March 11 at 12:30 p.m. and 7 p.m. and the finals will be held Saturday, March 12 at 7 p.m.

Friday's events include team and all-around competition. Those scores will qualify one team and one all-around gymnast for Nationals, to be held April 1 and 2 at Central Michigan University in Mount Pleasant. 134.0 points must be earned for a team to qualify for Nationals. 34.0 points must be earned by an individual gymnast to qualify for Nationals. The top scoring gymnast at each regional meet qualifies for nationals and then the next best 24 gymnasts in the country are selected by the NCWSA to compete at Nationals.

The top 12 gymnasts in each event from Friday's preliminary rounds will be in finals Saturday night.

On Friday, four events will be running at the same time: the balance beam, uneven bars, vaulting, and floor exercise. Each event has four judges. After the four scores are given, the highest and lowest are dropped and the two middle scores are averaged for the final total.

On Saturday, each event will have five judges. The high and low marks will be dropped and the three middle scores will be averaged for the final individual score. Two final events will run at the same time, but the routines will be alternated.

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Besides UM, 17 schools are scheduled to compete at the meet. Head Coach Sharon Dinkel said she expects the University of Washington, Pacific University, Oregon State and the University of Oregon to vie for the top spot.

Dinkel said UM's goal is to place in the top five. To do this, she said, UM must beat Eastern Washington State College. EWSC has beaten UM twice this year by only a few points.

Dinkel said that UM all-around gymnast Marsha Hamilton has a good chance to qualify for Nationals.

According to Dinkel, other superior all-around gymnasts and specialists in one event will be at the meet. Cindy Wacker from Pacific was the regional champion two years ago. Wacker missed last year's regional competition because of a knee injury. Seattle Pacific University's gymnast, Debbie Halle, who won the all-around title last year, will be back to compete.

UM's final preparation for the meet, according to Dinkel, is concentration on "perfect execution of skills."